

Black Willow

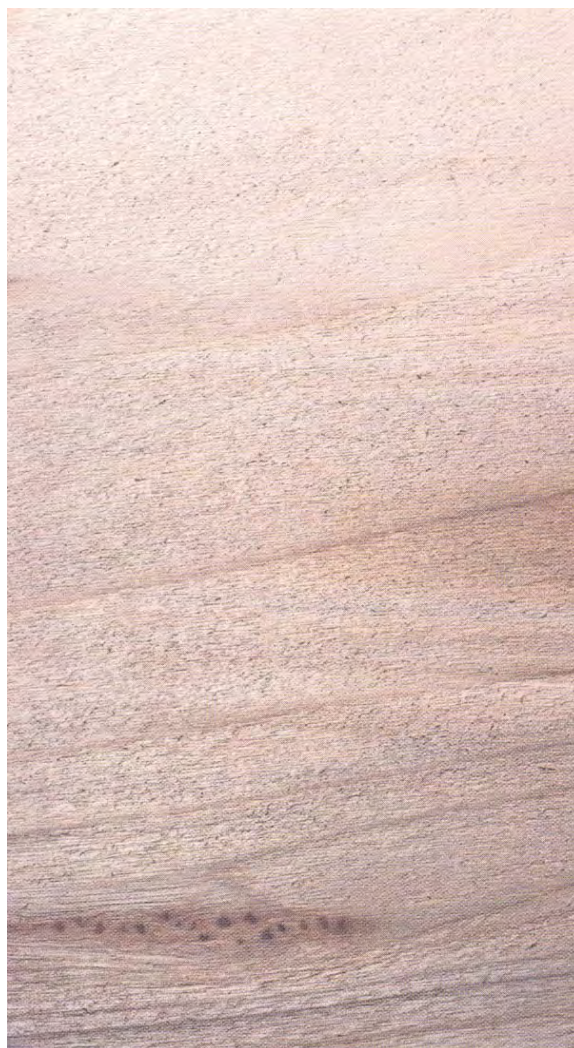
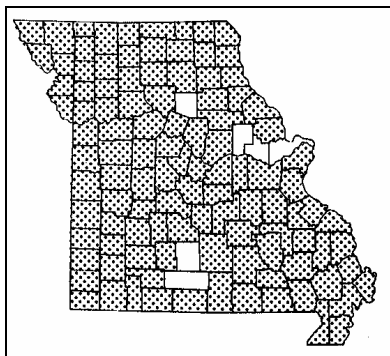
Salix nigra Marsh.

This species is known in the casket trade as “Salis” and elsewhere as swamp willow or willow. It is the largest and most widely known of our native willows. It reaches its best size on rich bottomland soils, but is found throughout the state around almost any water source. It is generally associated with cottonwood, soft maple, elm, sycamore and boxelder. It sprouts readily and often is the first species to invade newly deposited, bare soils in river or creek bottoms.

The sapwood is gray to light tan, in some cases nearly white. The heartwood varies from light gray to dark or reddish brown. The bark is dark brown or blackish, with deeply furrowed, scaly, forking ridges. Texture of the wood is fairly uniform to a little coarse, and is diffuse porous but growth rings are not conspicuous. It is a soft hardwood, similar to basswood in some ways and is easy to work. It tends to be a little fuzzy when sawn or sanded, but generally is easy to machine. It dries easily, although it tends to warp and crook unless restrained. It is stable when dry. It has a slightly sour smell when green, but little odor after being dried. It is generally considered not durable when exposed to conditions favoring decay.

The woods of *Salix* and *Populus* are very similar, but usually can be separated by color; the willows exhibit a decided brown or reddish-brown cast in contrast to the grayish-white or light grayish-brown shades that characterize *Populus* species.

Willow is sawn primarily into lumber. It is somewhat weak, although used in boxes and crates, inexpensive furniture, paneling, beekeepers' supplies and toys. The wood glues and stains well and is easily adapted to workshop projects.



Massengale

